



YouPEC | European Youth Perspective Conference on Biodiversity

Executive Summary

150 active young people from 35 European countries came together in Geel, Belgium for the 3rd European Youth Perspective Conference to discuss biodiversity issues. As youth, we are concerned about our future and the future of upcoming generations because they will be negatively affected by anthropogenic biodiversity loss. Every individual has to contribute to counteract biodiversity loss. However, the main causes of biodiversity decline cannot be solved on a personal level. We need you, the decision makers of today, to take action on the biodiversity crisis now.

Biodiversity is extremely important for everyone in providing our food supply, clean water and general human wellbeing. The value of these important services cannot be underestimated. Species are being lost at a rate 1000 times faster than before. The unique value of biodiversity needs to be safeguarded for future generations. That is why biodiversity is priceless, for everyone.

In 2001, the EU set a target to halt biodiversity loss by 2010, a goal which was not achieved. We recognise the EU's progress on its biodiversity policies, but the policies have been unsuccessful so far because of poor implementations of legislation, insufficient funding, lack of awareness, political willingness and knowledge. Given the EU's new targets proposed for 2020 and their vision for 2050, we, as representatives of European youth, urge all decision makers to consider and implement the following recommendations to stop biodiversity loss:

- Improve awareness of biodiversity through education and bringing people closer to nature.
- Creating the Natura 2000 network is indeed a positive achievement of the EU, but we need to ensure that the Habitats and Birds Directives are properly implemented by the member states.
- Improve monitoring and research on the status and trends of Europe's biodiversity.
- Halt habitat loss and extend the existing natural areas by building green infrastructure.
- We urge the EU to continue reforming the CAP, moving towards a strong reduction in overproduction and increasing the protection of biodiversity through the sustainable use of agricultural and pastoral land.
- A baseline of sustainability measures should be introduced that requires farmers to uphold a set of minimum standards as a prerequisite for receiving funds, 'public money for public goods'.
- Biodiversity funding is crucial for biodiversity protection and needs to be increased to an appropriate level immediately. Harmful subsidies must be eliminated as soon as possible.
- Priority should be given to integrating biodiversity into other policies such as agriculture, forestry, land use and climate change adaptation and mitigation.
- The private sector, businesses and other stakeholders need to develop an innovative green economy that stimulates prosperity and diminishes negative impacts on ecosystems.
- The EU and the Belgian presidency should show leadership at CBD COP10 in Nagoya and focus on securing strong global targets for 2020 and an ambitious vision for 2050 as well as adopting a comprehensive protocol on access and benefit sharing.

2010 is the International Year of Biodiversity and we all need to seize the opportunity and make this year a turning point in biodiversity policy. Now is the time to act. You are the leaders of today - ensure there is still a reason to be the leaders of tomorrow.